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The Effectiveness of Using Falou Application in Learning Speaking: An Experimental Study at SMKN 5 Mataram

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Abstract: Digital technology, would have a significant impact on language learning with the use of mobile applications which play a major part in it. This has also facilitated students in SMKN 5 and above to improve their language skills beyond school hours. This study used a combination of experimental research designs. A total of 328 were tenth-grade students, and from those last-graded, forty were selected utilizing a random sample design. The subjects were divided into two groups the experimental group who used the Falou app and their control set which had traditional speaking lessons; they collected quantitive data through speaking tests before and after the lessons, along with interviewing participants and acquiring descriptive data from interviews/observation of classroom environments. The thematic analysis of numeric data was then examined descriptively through t-test revealing statistically significant improvements in speaking skills both in the experimental group and with practice with Falou app. Results indicated that the reported feeling was more self-confident and enthusiastic when using this application for practice. As a conclusion, this study represents that falou app as mobile information learning device has an effective improvement for oral language target students (vocational high school) to understand proficiently and have number of repetition on proffering with this application.

Keywords: mobile-assisted language acquisition, Falou app, speaking skills, job training.

INTRODUCTION

When learning English as a foreign language (EFL), speaking is the most important skill to master. This is because it is the primary form of interaction in both social and academic settings. Unlike other skills, speaking involves the ability to instantly pull from one's vocabulary bank and manage the form and meaning of one's utterances. The idea is that to achieve communicative competence, one must have the ability to function in most situations with linguistic accuracy, spontaneity, and appropriateness. This is a level of ability that goes beyond a command of grammatical structures (Brown H. D., 2010). The real interaction involves a balance of various elements, form, and appropriateness in context. This is beyond the concern for accuracy of utterances. Students experience great rivalry learning speech (Dooly & Vinagre, 2022). This is the reason why students find it difficult to practice.

It is hard to learn English in the high school. This is caused as a result of several factors. Examples include low self-esteem, discomfort, and of course, the fear of making mistakes. This is worsened by the lack of student-centered techniques in a majority of classrooms. (Lee & Park, 2017; Schaefer et al., 2019).

This is even more apparent in Indonesia's vocational high schools (SMK). Compared to general academic students, vocational students are expected to walk into a job and engage in professional dialogue, speak with customers, and discuss technical issues from day one. Unfortunately, classrooms lack the provision to develop this essential skill and employ teaching methods that are several decades old. There is a significant gap between the expected professional communication and the students' actual communication abilities. (Chodzkienė et al., 2022; Polyakova & Galstyan-Sargsyan, 2021).

The challenges posed have repercussions. Technology-laden instruction seems to be one possible answer. Within this context, Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) has tended to receive more attention. It is associated with a degree of educational flexibility and personalization. Mobile devices allow learners to practice language skills whenever and wherever it is convenient for them and thus extend their learning opportunities beyond the walls of a classroom. As Kukulska-Hulme and Shield (2008) have noted, the use of MALL provides learners with ongoing and situational learning contexts, which are essential for the development and implementation of real communicative skills (Zhang et al., 2023; Machwate et al., 2021). Moving away from the traditional static learning model to a more dynamic learning model, anytime, anywhere learning is paving the way for the educational use of mobile technology.

A number of emulating software applications (e.g. Duolingo, Busuu) have turned into conventional tools for language learning. These software applications have numerous interactive features (vocabulary, grammar, etc.), which have been instrumental to language learning. "That

said, research often highlights a catch: many of these platforms focus on passive tasks—like recognizing words or getting a grammar rule right—rather than pushing for spontaneous conversation. As a result, they don't always help as much as we'd like with actual speaking skills, often leaving gaps in a learner's fluency and pronunciation (Wang & Devitt, 2026; Bozdağ, 2018).

Unlike many other language learning applications, Falou utilizes Automatic Speech Recognition (ASR) technology to provide learners with an interactive environment for practicing speaking through dialogue simulations. The application delivers immediate, constructive feedback on learners' pronunciation, fluency, and speaking accuracy, which are three essential components of English speaking proficiency. Such immediate feedback plays a crucial role in the language learning process, as it helps learners recognize their errors, monitor their progress, and make appropriate corrections, ultimately leading to improved speaking performance.(Ahn & Lee, 2016; Kholis, 2021).

There are also strengths in ASR-based applications and many research gaps have arisen over time that we find to be interesting. First, some research in the area of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning focuses on general skills over specific language skills. But often that misses the main dimensions of speaking, specifically fluency and accuracy when integrated with pronunciation. Secondly, some of the very popular applications such as Busuu and Duolingo have considerable research coverage, while emerging applications like Falou are still young in this regard, particularly pertaining to their potential implemented role for advancing speaking skills through ASR technology. Finally, the dynamic of using these apps in the context of Indonesia's vocational high schools with students having practical and specific speech-related issues, remains largely unexplored (Schaefer et al., 2019; Al Khateeb & Alshahrani, 2019).

This research intends to assess the Falou application for developing speaking skills by measuring aspects such as fluency, pronunciation, and accuracy in the specified student population of grade 10, SMKN 5 Mataram. It is hoped that this study, similar to (Kholis, 2021; Chodzkienė et al., 2022), will contribute to English language pedagogy by providing an empirical basis for the implementation of ASR -based mobile learning in VET contexts

RESEARCH METHOD

In order to analyze the impact of Falou Application on students speaking skills, this study employed a mixed-methods approach. This approach permitted the use of a dual system. First, it allowed the research team to collect data using the quantitative approach to assess the speaking ability of students of the Experimental group. Second, it allowed the research team to provide a platform for the students of the Experimental group to express their opinions and share their personal experiences using the application. The diverse approach is instrumental in defining the research problem effectively and addressing the limitations of the other (Creswell, 2018).

The population included all 328 10th grade students of SMKN 5 Mataram. Twenty students comprised the experimental group, who learned speaking via the Falou application, while the other twenty comprised the control group, who were taught speaking using the traditional approach. Random sampling ensured that every student had an equal chance of being included in the study (Fraenkel, J. R., Wallen, N. E., & Hyun, H.H., 2012).

The study utilized instruments which included a speaking test made up of Pre-test and Post-test speaking evaluations, which measured students' pronunciation, speaking fluency, vocabulary and grammatical skills, comprehension, and interview. In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted to investigate students' assessment of the Falou application. Classroom observations were also conducted to examine students' level of interest and engagement during the learning process. In the area of applied research, quantitative information is summarized and described in detail and independent sample t-test modified, while qualitative information is analyzed applying thematic analysis. The t-test is one of the instruments that is often utilized in experimental research and is used to determine if there are statistically significant effects that will differentiate the two groups (Field, 2018).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of the speaking tests showed significant improvement in the experimental group compared to the control group.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

Group	N	Pre-test Mean	Post-test Mean	Std. Deviation
Experimental	20	61.80	79.40	5.12
Control	20	62.30	69.70	4.98

The experimental group shows a larger improvement compared to the control group.

Table 2. Paired Sample T-Test (Experimental Group)

Test	Mean	Std. Dev	t	Sig. (p)
Pre-test	61.80	5.34		
Post-test	79.40	4.85	9.67	0.000

Since **p < 0.05**, the improvement in the experimental group is statistically significant.

The results indicate that students who used the Falou application achieved higher improvement in speaking performance than those who learned through traditional methods.

Table 3. Independent Sample T-Test

Group	Mean	T	Sig
Experimental	79.40		
Control	69.70	5.21	0.000

The difference between the two groups is statistically significant.

According to their interviews, students valued the speech practice feature on Falou's app, even more so because of the instant feedback feature on their pronunciation.

This technology has improved students' speaking skills. Data has shown the speaking-related features on Falou have improved student speaking skills by providing students with more opportunities to practice speaking. Talking more is the best way to improve on pronunciation and speaking skills, as shown by (Stockwell, 2012).

Practicing speaking on the Falou app also made students increasingly motivated and confident. Students reported that their anxiety levels lowered when practicing speaking on the app and speaking individually in class, and further lowered when practicing speaking on the app as opposed to speaking in class. Digital learning aids are shown to lower language-related anxiety and promote confidence when using foreign languages (Dörnyei, 2020).

With the instant feedback feature on Falou, students can improve their flow and accuracy of feedback as it marks their pronunciation errors in real time. Falou improves students' language skills within the feedback-response cycle that supports language learning. To speak fluently and accurately, consistent feedback and correction are essential (Ellis, R., 2017).

CONCLUSION

This study aims to assess the effectiveness of the Falou application in the speaking skill of the tenth-grade students of SMKN 5 Mataram. As for the result, students with the Falou application improved their speaking skills much more than those with the conventional teaching and learning process.

This study also showed that the application improved motivation, confidence, and pronunciation. Hence, the incorporation of mobile-assisted language learning applications, specifically Falou, in the English teaching process, creates an engaging learning experience and improves learners' speaking skills.

It is advisable that upcoming researches have larger sample sizes and longer timeframes to assess the impact of mobile learning applications in language teaching and learning process.

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